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ABSTRACT

A study examined the views of state vocational education directors concerning the impact of the 1976 amendments to the Vocational Education Act in their states. Specifically addressed in the study were the effects of the amendments on elimination of sex stereotyping and on helping displaced homemakers. To collect these data researchers administered telephone interviews to 19 state directors (or their representatives). A majority of directors interviewed felt that the 1976 amendments have been effective in focusing attention on the problem of sex equity in vocational education and recommended retention of the current federal provisions. Most survey respondents could not suggest any alternative methods of promoting or increasing sex equity in vocational education. In addition, most directors interviewed were opposed to a block grant for vocational education, and approximately one-third of them felt that their state will reduce sex equity efforts if Congress passes a block grant for vocational education without the current sex equity provisions. Based on these findings, recommendations were made for continued federal emphasis and support for sex equity in vocational education now that states are beginning to support it. (MN)

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SEX EQUITY ISSUES IN THE REAUTHORIZATION OF THE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION ACT:

A Survey of State Vocational Education Directors

The Federal Education Project

of the

LAWYERS' COMMITTEE FOR CIVIL RIGHTS

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By

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July 1982

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I. Introduction

On May 6, 1982, Senator Orrin Hatch (R-UT) testified before the House Subcommittee on Elementary, Secondary and Vocational Education about S. 2325, the Senator's administration-backed bill to consolidate the Vocational Education Act of 1963 and the Adult Education Act. Senator Hatch acknowledged that his bill does not address two important provisions contained in the 1976 amendments to the Vocational Education Act -- those requiring efforts to overcome sex stereotyping and provision of services to displaced homemakers. The Senator explained that this omission was not the result of a lack of interest on his part in sex equity, but rather was due to the paucity of information "with which to divine a new or different sense of direction."

Senator Hatch criticized the 1976 sex equity amendments for failing to generate state and local support and funding for non-traditional vocational education programs and other sex equity activities, stating that only six (6) states have reported spending any of their own money to support the activities of the sex equity coordinators, that there has been little change in the nontraditional enrollment patterns since 1972, and that most states have spent only small amounts of non-federal money on displaced homemaker programs. (See Appendix A for a Summary of Sex Equity Provisions of the 1976 Amendments.)

Concluding that the data show that "there are problems with the existing legislation" on sex equity in vocational education, Senator Hatch urged the House Subcommittee to work with his Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources and recognized women's

groups to explore alternatives to the current law. Hatch said, "If the current authority can be improved, and it would seem that it could, we need more compelling information than we now have to help us improve existing laws and thus give women greater access to nontraditional vocational education offerings."

Partly in response to Senator Hatch's call for more information about ways of increasing nontraditional enrollments and improving opportunities for women (including displaced homemakers) in vocational education programs, the Federal Education Project (the Project) conducted a survey of state vocational education leaders across the country to determine what alternatives to the existing legislation, if any, they believe are needed to inspire greater state and local support of sex equity programs. Through this effort (and others), the Project hopes to provide insight and information about the critical need for improving vocational education services for women and girls. We hope this information will be useful not only to Senator Hatch with regard to S. 2325, but to the public and policymakers who are committed to increasing educational equity for women during the process of reauthorizing the Vocational Education Act.

II. The Federal Education Project Survey

The objective of the Project's survey was to talk informally with a cross-section of leaders in vocational education from various parts of the country to solicit their views about sex equity in vocational education. More specifically, we sought to gather information about what state vocational education directors (or, in some instances, their representatives) thought about the impact of the 1976 amendments to the Vocational Education Act in their states; the reasons the amendments, as Senator Hatch noted, have not encouraged state and local sex equity expenditures; and ways the federal law could better address sex equity problems in vocational education.

A total of 19 state directors (or representatives) were interviewed by telephone during a three-week period in June and July of 1982. (See Appendix B for list of directors contacted.) Interviewees were selected according to various criteria, including either a very good or very bad state record of putting state or federal dollars into sex equity programs, according to 1978-1979 Vocational Education Data System (VEDS) data and geographical diversity. (See Appendix C for geographical breakdown.) Often, the selection was determined by the availability of the directors within the time set for completion of the survey.

In an effort to provide uniformity for comparative purposes, a survey form was used that contained a list of eighteen (18) questions. Interviews generally lasted from 30 minutes to over an hour. It was our experience that nearly all of the directors interviewed readily shared their views, concerns, and experiences,

and gave generously to us of their time. We thank them for talking to us.

III. Summary of Findings

At the onset of the survey, the Federal Education Project was aware that the National Association of State Directors of Vocational Education (NASDVE) had released position statements on the reauthorization of the Vocational Education Act. With respect to sex equity, NASDVE's position is that vocational education programs should "ensure the provision of equal opportunity for all persons to gain access to and succeed in programs of vocational education," recognizing "the continuing need to meet the unique needs of identified populations." (Position statement of National Association of State Directors of Vocational Education, Reauthorization: Vocational Education Act, April, 1981, p. 7.)

The Survey results echo the NASDVE position statements' support for sex equity in vocational education, but give more concrete information about the directors' opinions regarding specific ways to achieve greater equity for females. The major findings are summarized below:

- A majority of directors interviewed recommended retention of the current federal provisions for sex equity in vocational education.
- A majority of directors interviewed could not suggest any alternative methods of promoting or increasing sex equity in vocational education.
- Half of the directors interviewed considered the few years since the 1976 amendments to the Vocational Education Act to be too short a period in which to conclude that state efforts to overcome ingrained sex-biased

attitudes in vocational education have failed.

- The majority of directors interviewed are opposed to a block grant for vocational education.
- Approximately one-third of the directors interviewed believed that their state will reduce sex equity efforts if Congress passes a block grant for vocational education without the current sex equity provisions; another third thought that reduced efforts are a possibility for their state, especially if there are more budget cuts.
- A majority of directors interviewed thought that their state probably or definitely would not continue to employ a full-time sex equity coordinator if Congress passed a block grant for vocational education.
- A majority of directors interviewed agreed that more state efforts are necessary to address equity for women in vocational education, especially in the area of training for traditionally male jobs.
- The majority of directors interviewed said their state was currently either increasing or holding constant its sex equity funding and efforts.

The Project is encouraged by the results of the survey because they seem to indicate a growing awareness within the vocational education community of the importance of providing equitable vocational opportunities and specialized services for women. Although the 1976 amendments may not have generated overwhelming

state and local support for sex equity programs, the survey results support the view that the elimination of the federal mandates and requirements is not the answer to the problem.

Most directors seem to believe that the 1976 amendments have been effective in increasing awareness and focusing attention on the problem of sex equity in vocational education, and have caused the states to begin searching for solutions. Five years after the amendments were enacted, we found general support among the state directors for the notion of sex equity efforts in vocational education programs, but also a tendency to view sex equity primarily as a national, rather than a state, priority. The consensus of opinion among the directors that we talked with was that, particularly during times of budget reductions, states will be unlikely to use state funds to support national priorities. As one director stated, "If you don't give states a direction, in times of tight resources, states will not pick it up." Because of the fiscal pressures on states, and the view that sex equity remains a national priority, many state directors concurred that sex equity in vocational education, in the words of one director, "is not going to happen unless they mandate it" in federal law.

IV. Discussion of Specific Results

- Many of the directors interviewed disagreed with the assertion that the 1976 amendments on sex equity have not generated state and local funding or support for sex equity in vocational education.

  8 - disagree (arguing that state efforts simply do not show up in the VEDS data, or that their states are putting support behind sex equity in vocational education.)

  11 - gave explanations for states not supporting sex equity to a greater extent, or for thinking the criticism is irrelevant.

We began our interviews in most cases by describing statements by Senator Hatch about the failure of the 1976 amendments to generate state and local funding for sex equity and the search for alternative ways of increasing equity for women in vocational education. When we asked directors to tell us why the 1976 amendments had not generated more funding in their state for equity efforts, they either gave explanations for limited state support, insisted that states should not be expected to fund sex equity in the first place, or argued that their state had supported sex equity. A predominant theme in most answers, however, was that the 1976 amendments should not be adjudged a failure simply because the first five years have not produced significant state and local funding of sex equity programs.

A significant number of directors responded by praising the 1976 amendments for "doing the job" in their state by providing the "catalyst" or "impetus" that served to increase awareness within the state of the need to begin focusing on women's equity problems in vocational education. William Wenzel from New Jersey, for example, referring to the sex equity provisions in the 1976

amendments, stated, "It's one of the few things we've started that makes a difference." James Athen from Iowa thought that the 1976 amendments provided not only the opportunity for states to undertake initiatives to increase sex equity, but also the "nudging," and stated, "We probably wouldn't be where we are today without that nudging." Many others stressed that it is unrealistic to expect significant changes after only five years of federal and state emphasis on sex equity. In the words of Ray Ryan from Arizona, "You don't change the social context of the nation in five years . . . it takes time."

Several explanations were given for the low level of state expenditures on sex equity programs. Some directors pointed to the entrenched conservative attitudes about women in many states, and stated that these attitudes still affect state legislators' funding decisions. As one director cautioned, "It's going to take a number of years before we have the kinds of statistics he [Senator Hatch] would like to have." Quite a few directors referred to the fiscal difficulties facing many states, and the reluctance of states to, as one director put it, "go all out [for sex equity] when the roads need fixing." These directors explained that states must prioritize carefully during times of shrinking budgets, that states tend to fund what they see as established state commitments or basic training programs before equity programs, and that states prefer to rely on the federal dollar for funding federally-mandated programs such as sex equity. The conclusion reached by some was that continued federal requirements and set-asides are essential. A few suggested matching

grants could be helpful in encouraging state funding of sex equity programs.

Still other directors expressed resentment about criticism of the states' failure to fund sex equity. Several persons saw incongruity in Congress asking states, through the 1976 amendments, to undertake new initiatives in vocational education (i.e., sex equity) without providing additional federal aid to the states for these purposes. Another person resented the criticism because he thought it irrelevant whether state or federal funds were used for sex equity, as long as the 1976 amendments accomplished their main goal of providing the impetus for increased expenditures and support overall. This director felt that his state had demonstrated its support of sex equity by spending federal dollars, even if no state monies had been used.

Almost all the directors we spoke with defended their states' commitment to increasing equity for females in vocational education. Almost half of those interviewed argued that the VEDS system does not fully reflect a state's sex equity efforts. One person, for example, explained that his state reports a displaced homemaker program to VEDS as a program for the disadvantaged; another described how state vocational education dollars have been used in his state to provide an occupational awareness program for grades kindergarten through grade eight, and that this would not be reported to VEDS; still another thought that many of his state's sex equity activities, such as in-service meetings for staff and preparation of brochures and curriculum materials, are not reported to VEDS as sex equity expenditures. At least one director arranged to send us material substantiating his

state's unreported sex equity efforts. A few others simply stated that the number of dollars expended and recorded by VEDS does not measure a state's sex equity commitment.

- Most of the directors interviewed agreed that more state efforts are necessary to address sex equity needs, and in particular, to make women aware of nontraditional opportunities.

  16 - think more state efforts are necessary
  1 - said his state was doing as much as it can
  1 - did not answer
  1 - said that the issue should be addressed by state and local boards

Although most directors readily agreed that more efforts are necessary in their state to promote sex equity and nontraditional opportunities, many also indicated that without continued federal funding and statutory requirements, these increased efforts are very unlikely. A director from a northeastern state specifically warned against eliminating the federal mandate and set-asides at this time, stating that if that occurred, his state equity office would close down and the state would effectively be "throwing away the money" already spent on sex equity. Another director from a western state agreed that it is too early to eliminate federal support for sex equity, and said, "You have to keep needling people, probably more than slightly."

In addition, several respondents referred to state budget problems as the cause of the lack of increased state emphasis on sex equity. Yet despite these fiscal problems, most directors said that their states were currently either increasing or holding constant funding for sex equity (7 said their states were increasing funding; 8 said their states were holding constant,

at least as long as there are no more state or federal budget cutbacks; 2 said their states had decreased funding; 2 didn't know). Several of those directors who said their states were holding constant funding for sex equity programs or efforts attributed the failure to increase funding to the states' money difficulties.

- Most directors, when asked what kinds of efforts are necessary to increase enrollments of women in nontraditional programs, said that continued awareness and counseling programs are needed.

  16 - said awareness programs are needed (along with other things)
  1 - said his state first needs a broader range of programs beyond agriculture and home economics
  1 - suggested counseling and outreach to local advocacy groups
  1 - said he didn't think the majority of women in his state were interested in nontraditional training

The overwhelming majority of directors interviewed believed that increasing the numbers of women enrolled in nontraditional vocational education programs will necessitate changing the attitudes of women about doing nontraditional work. Many directors spoke of the deeply ingrained attitudes that are still supported by parental models and peer pressure that continue to communicate to women and girls the idea that they should stick to traditional careers. Some described successful programs established in their states to combat these traditional notions of women's work. Many directors also concurred that these awareness and pre-vocational exploratory programs should be started even earlier than the secondary school level, in order to inspire attitude change before children are at a point where they must begin making decisions

about the kind of training they want to take.

A major theme among the responses to this question was that long-term planning is necessary if we want to really begin changing the concept of women's work in our society. This was expressed by repeated references to the need for awareness programs for elementary level students. Several directors expressed the view that such long-term planning is not encouraged by monitoring systems that emphasize increases in current enrollments; they argue that states have no incentive to provide sex equity programs for younger students because such programs would not produce enrollment results for quite some time. Very few directors, however, stressed the need to, at the same time, work with adult women and high school students who, if given information, options, and counseling and support, would be likely to show interest and aptitude for nontraditional careers.

Several other suggestions were made about ways to increase nontraditional enrollments in vocational education. One person emphasized the need to provide training for vocational education personnel. Several felt that better counseling services would be helpful, noting that vocational education needs counselors who are sensitive to the needs of women and girls. At least two of these directors said they would recommend that the federal law include requirements for vocational education counselors to provide specific sex equity information to women and girls. Others mentioned the need for pre-vocational exploratory programs that would allow students to experience different kinds of nontraditional activities, the need for role models to speak with

potential students, and the need for outreach to local advocacy groups to generate publicity about the nontraditional vocational education training programs.

- A majority of directors interviewed felt that their states have not been able adequately to meet the needs of displaced homemakers in all communities and that more needs to be done.

  11 - said that they have not met the needs of displaced homemakers
  5 - said that their state is meeting the needs of displaced homemakers
  3 - did not respond

Although the majority of directors we talked with indicated that more could be done to address the needs of displaced homemakers in their states, most also felt that their states have been making great progress in this area. Several described how their states have been able to increase the number of programs serving displaced homemakers during the last few years. Often, directors stressed that they prefer to enroll displaced homemakers in regular training programs rather than creating separate programs especially for this target group. Some of these directors also saw the need to provide supportive, counseling, and remedial services. Several directors mentioned that their states provided funding for displaced homemakers' training programs separate from vocational education allocations. At least one director thought that, of all the sex equity programs, those for displaced homemakers enjoy the most acceptance and support in state legislatures.

As in their responses to the question about overall sex equity funding, the majority of directors indicated that their

states were currently either increasing or holding constant funding for displaced homemaker programs (6 said they were increasing funding; 6 said they were holding constant; the remainder either did not know or did not respond).

A few directors mentioned the difficulty of providing services to displaced homemakers in rural areas. One director, for example, explained that when money is available to fund programs for displaced homemakers, it is usually channeled into densely populated urban areas where more people can be served for less cost. When asked what the federal law could do to encourage states to provide more assistance to displaced homemakers, many directors said simply that more money was needed. A few, however, said that set-asides are necessary, because, as explained by one director, "the effort is too new not to" have set-asides.

- Most state directors thought vocational education should be responsible for providing supportive services to disadvantaged students to enable them to succeed in vocational education programs.

  15 - believed vocational education should provide supportive services (although many also thought vocational education should coordinate with other agencies)
  2 - seemed to think vocational education exists only to provide training, although agreeing that some students need supportive services to succeed in vocational education
  2 - were unsure, would like to think other agencies will provide services

There was substantial support among the directors we talked with for the provision of supportive services to disadvantaged vocational education students. As one director stated, "You're

not going to serve them [the disadvantaged] without supportive services." Quite a few directors mentioned that vocational education, however, should coordinate with other providers in the community, such as community-based-organizations, churches, and CETA programs, to meet supportive service needs. Several also emphasized the need for federal financial aid for supportive services, since supportive services are often the first areas to be cut at the state level. These directors explained that states, during times of limited resources, must prioritize to maintain the basic vocational training programs, which they see as the "heart" of the vocational education system. When directors were asked what the federal law can do to enable the states to provide necessary supportive services, several said that earmarked funds would help. As one director stated, "The money's got to be there, and it's got to be categorical." Other directors felt that the states simply need more federal funds without earmarking, or were satisfied with the present law.

When directors were asked if their states had identified any special supportive services that women and girls may need to succeed in vocational education programs, many did not seem to have a ready answer. Only 5 mentioned child care as important; 5 others said they had not identified any special supportive services for females; 2 said to ask their sex equity coordinators; 3 mentioned transportation and support networks and remedial programs; and 3 did not respond.

Many seemed to downplay child care needs. One person, for example, stated that he did not think women needed child care to succeed in vocational education training programs because

employers in his state have begun to set up child care facilities; when asked how child care centers at a few worksites would alleviate women's needs for child care while they were in vocational training programs, he had no reply. When it was suggested to another director that women might need child care, he emphasized that men, also, need child care. Others stated directly that they did not think the women in their states consider child care to be a necessary supportive service for vocational education students.

- The majority of directors interviewed are opposed to a consolidation of vocational and adult education.

13 - oppose consolidation
3 - favor consolidation
3 - did not comment

The directors who oppose consolidation of vocational and adult education almost always gave the same two reasons -- because they see the two programs as having different purposes and audiences, and because they think consolidation would result in reduced funding overall. Several also felt that if the two programs were consolidated, vocational education would tend to "swallow" adult education in their states. Those who said that they favor consolidation described the two programs as having the same goal -- preparing people for the job market. At least two of those favoring consolidation simply thought that the existing adult education programs in their states were poorly run, and that vocational educators could administer them better.

- The majority of directors interviewed are opposed to a block grant for vocational education.

13 - oppose the block grant approach to vocational education

5 - favor a block grant for vocational education
1 - favors a block grant, but on the condition that the law retain some accountability for the needs of targeted groups

Most of those who oppose the block grant approach for vocational education stated that they oppose it because it would result in a lack of state accountability for the needs of target populations. William Wenzel of New Jersey, for example, said there was no reason to have a block grant: "The only reason I hear is state flexibility. . . . then the target populations would slip right through. A block grant gives the states too much flexibility." Ray Ryan from Arizona believed that with a block grant, "Your equity program is going to go straight down the tubes." Addison Hobbs of Maryland said that since the states have had problems promoting equity even with "the feds on our backs," under a block grant the states would have more problems because there would be no accountability. He concluded, "Accountability is essential." Robert Carter of Alabama felt that the national priorities are "significant" and that vocational education is capable of providing equity. He added that, in a block grant, without the current earmarking and federal law requirements, the national priorities would be "diffused." The clear and insistent message from most of the directors opposing the block grant for vocational education was that the states still need a federal mandate for improving sex equity.

Others opposing the block grant explained the danger of shifting responsibility for target populations to the states, where local political pressure may not be favorable to women, the disadvantaged, and other target groups. Frank Drake from

Missouri told us to "look at the record of the states," and warned that if advocates want something done for target populations they should be sure the federal law provides for it; otherwise, local political clout will determine the states' priorities. Dr. Drake added, "I just don't have that much faith in block grants." Patricia Langlin of California said that even in the most concerned states, pretty soon "you make choices," and that target groups will lose because supportive services will be the first activities to fall by the wayside. Other directors also cautioned against placing local officials in a position where they must respond to the strongest political pressure. In the words of one director, "If you keep it [sex equity] in the national purview, your program will be much better off."

Several directors opposed a block grant for vocational education on another ground -- that block grants are just ways to reduce federal funding. As one person put it, the block grant approach is just "another way to hide the fact that they [Congress] are going to cut some more money." Another pointed out that block grants do not necessarily reduce paperwork for the states. He referred to the CETA program as an illustrative example. Yet another said the block grant approach in Senator Hatch's bill does not even give the states more flexibility, since it still leaves the states with only 35% discretionary funding.

The directors who stated they would favor a block grant approach often give state "flexibility" as their reason. Several stipulated that their support of a block grant for vocational education was contingent upon federal funding being

earmarked for vocational education only; these directors would not support a block grant program where vocational education was combined with other programs and where the amount of funding for state vocational education would be left to the Governor's discretion. One supporter of a vocational education block grant made his support contingent on the provision for some state accountability for addressing needs of target groups.

- Many of the directors interviewed felt that their states would reduce sex equity efforts if Congress passed a block grant for vocational education without the current sex equity provisions.

  7 - felt their states would eventually reduce their sex equity efforts
  4 - said they would try to maintain current efforts on sex equity, but that there probably would be reductions if there were any more federal or state budget cuts
  1 - said his state would not cut sex equity as long as he was there, but that if he left, things might be different
  1 - said his state would continue current efforts, but that he thought nationwide, there would be a significant reduction
  6 - thought their states would maintain current efforts

Most of the directors we talked with thought that elimination of the current federal law provisions on sex equity could cause a reduction in state efforts in one way or another. As noted above, many felt that their particular state would definitely be affected. Homer J. Halverson from Washington described the effect this way: "I think we'd still have effort, but a lot less, and no one measuring that effort." Another director said it would be "the biggest mess you've ever seen." The same director told us that in the event that the current federal provisions were eliminated, he

would try to get funding from his state legislature for sex equity, but that he didn't think he had much of a chance. Walter Ulrich from Utah thought that his state would probably continue its sex equity efforts for a year or so, but that they would be "reduced considerably," and probably eventually eliminated.

Quite a few other directors indicated that they would try to maintain their states' sex equity programs, but granted the possibility that efforts would be reduced. Most of those in this category said that increased fiscal pressure, caused by federal budget cuts, state cuts, or a worsening economy, could cause a reduction in effort in their states. One director, for example, said that if a state faced serious fiscal choices, the state would figure that if the "feds" don't think sex equity is important, the states shouldn't either. This director explained that states, under fiscal pressure, will look to see what they must do, at a minimum, to comply with federal law requirements. One director said that his state would maintain its commitment to sex equity as long as he is there as director, but he said that makes sex equity in vocational education dependent upon personalities and "that's not good." Francis Tuttle of Oklahoma thought that Oklahoma would definitely continue its sex equity programs, but that nationwide, there would be a lessening of commitment and effort. Dr. Tuttle also admitted the possibility of reduced supportive services in his state if there are more federal cuts and fiscal choices to be made.

When directors were asked whether passage of a block grant by Congress without the current federal provisions on sex equity

would affect their state's support of displaced homemaker programs, many thought that displaced homemaker programs would continue. Eight predicted their programs would continue unaffected; 3 said their programs would definitely "wane;" 4 said their programs would probably be reduced if their states were forced into serious fiscal dilemmas; 3 felt that their states would continue funding programs that would be suitable for displaced homemakers, but would not be called "displaced homemaker" programs; 1 said the decision would be left to local agencies.

- Most of the directors interviewed thought their states would not continue to employ a full-time sex equity coordinator if Congress passes a block grant without the current sex equity requirements.

  11 - said their states would not or probably would not employ a full-time sex equity coordinator (at least two of these were directors who also said their states would definitely not reduce their sex equity efforts)
  6 - felt their states would continue to employ a full-time coordinator
  1 - said his state would employ such a person as long as he was director
  1 - said his state would employ such a person if money was available

A large number of the directors either said that their states definitely would not employ a full-time sex equity coordinator if Congress passes a block grant eliminating current federal law requirements or admitted that there was a good chance this would happen. Often, those in the latter category said maintenance of a full-time position for sex equity, like all of the state's sex equity efforts, would be dependent on state finances. A director from a midwestern state said simply that "it would be a hard struggle" to keep a full-time person on board.

At least two of the directors who said their states would not keep a full-time sex equity coordinator had earlier stated that their states would not reduce sex equity efforts in the event of a block grant without current sex equity requirements. Each of these persons argued that sex equity ought to be a responsibility of everyone working within the state vocational education system, and should not be assigned to only one person. W. N. Kirby, serving as the acting director for Texas, for example, after making this argument, said, "I'm not sure that that might not be better." But Dr. Kirby later stated that if the responsibility is split in this manner, it will mean less total time spent on sex equity.

- A majority of directors interviewed suggested that the current federal provisions for sex equity in vocational education be retained.

  12 - would suggest retaining current federal law provisions
  5 - are dissatisfied with the current law
  2 - would retain all current law provisions except the $50,000 set-aside

Most of the directors we talked with strongly supported retaining the current federal law provisions on sex equity, meaning those enacted in the 1976 amendments. There seems to be a current acceptance of the sex equity provisions that was not present when they were initially enacted. Typical of the comments was one by Elwyn Wheat of Mississippi, who said, referring to the current law's provisions, "When they were implemented in 1976, we all thought they were outrageously restrictive, but we've gotten used to them." Many people praised the 1976 initiative and emphasized the need for the "omnipresent function"

of federal law on sex equity. Michael King, assistant to the acting director in New York, for instance, emphasized that it is "necessary to have a federal mandate [even though] people may resent it."

Given directors' initial resentment of the sex equity initiatives in the 1976 amendments, it was not surprising to learn that many of the directors who have accepted and who now support retaining the 1976 provisions would not favor strengthening them -- by creating larger sex equity set-asides or more stringent requirements, for example. But at least two of the directors we spoke with insisted that federal set-asides, larger than the current $50,000 set-aside for sex equity coordinators, were necessary to address properly the problems of sex equity in vocational education. The lack of support for increased set-asides, interestingly enough, was often voiced by persons who atrributed their states' success in the sex equity area primarily to the efforts of their sex equity coordinators, the one existing set-aside in current law.

Some state directors, however, seem never to have adjusted to the 1976 amendments' sex equity provisions, especially the $50,000 set-aside for sex equity coordinator activities. Reuben Guenthner, the acting director for North Dakota, for example, said that if the federal law mandates something, "you start developing a negative feeling" about the area. He also said, however, that without federal requirements, sex equity depends on the leadership of those who administer vocational education in a particular state. Although Mr. Guenthner was satisfied that

North Dakota had committed vocational education leaders and administrators, he did not elaborate on what would happen to women and girls who live in states where vocational education administrators lack such a commitment.

- A majority of directors interviewed could not suggest any method of promoting or increasing sex equity in vocational education other than existing provisions and directions.

  12 - answered that they knew of no other way to address sex equity
  1 - suggested an appropriation of additional federal funds and earmarking it for sex equity purposes
  6 - suggested that the federal mandate be retained in some manner, but made suggestions that seemed geared to giving states greater "flexibility" and less accountability

Most of the directors we interviewed simply said that they were happy with the provisions on sex equity contained in the current law. Walter E. Ulrich of Utah, however, suggested additional federal money be earmarked for sex equity purposes.

Those who made suggestions for alternative methods seemed generally to be describing ways of decreasing federal requirements for sex equity in favor of, as one director put it, "giving us [the states] a chance" -- essentially trusting the states to continue sex equity initiatives. Several persons, for example, described alternative systems where the states would be responsible for assessing the needs of women and girls for vocational education services and including goals in their state plans, while the federal government would monitor the achievement of the goals. Often these same directors, when asked how states would be held accountable for progress, however, would say that

"numbers" (of enrollments, for example) should not be used, or that the amount of money spent on sex equity was not a proper indicator.

Additionally, directors suggesting alternative systems often spoke in terms of "equal educational opportunity" (EEO) and "access" without talking about affirmative efforts that the states should take to actively address women's equity problems in vocational education. Often, these directors indicated they would recommend that federal legislation should make reference to EEO and access, or "equity for all" as one director phrased it, without specific mandates for affirmative sex equity efforts. When one such director was asked how such federal legislation would advance sex equity when similar pre-1976 legislation had failed to inspire state attention to sex equity in vocational education, the director responded, "Maybe women didn't want those things" then.

V. Conclusion

The Project believes that the responses to our survey of state directors of vocational education indicate that the direction of the 1976 amendments on sex equity has been positive. While we often noted a resistance to rapid change and a failure on the part of many states to adopt sex equity goals as state priorities, we also learned that the 1976 amendments have caused the majority of states at least to begin addressing the problems of sex bias and discrimination in their vocational education systems.

Although vocational education has not yet attained the level of progress that would be indicated by greater state funding of sex equity efforts, the attitudes of vocational education administrators appear to be changing from resistance to support of sex equity activities. The directors we talked with showed enthusiastic support for retaining the current federal provisions on sex equity and an understanding that a block grant approach to vocational education without federal equity requirements is synonymous with a reduced state emphasis on the needs of target groups, including the disadvantaged and women. There exists now at least a theoretical acceptance of the need for increased state support for sex equity in vocational education, and a consensus that federal support and emphasis so far should not be deemed a failure simply because it has not substantially elevated sex equity within state funding priorities.

The Project submits that we cannot afford to relax the federal emphasis and support for sex equity in vocational

education at a time when states are beginning to support it. Not only have the attitudes of state vocational education administrators changed, but also enrollment patterns have changed, showing slow but steady increases in the numbers of females in nontraditional programs. The slow rate of progress, if anything, is the result of the permissive rather than mandatory nature of the current federal sex equity provisions.

APPENDIX A

SUMMARY OF SEX EQUITY PROVISIONS OF THE 1976 AMENDMENTS

State Administration

Purpose. The Act's Statement of Purpose made overcoming sex discrimination and sex stereotyping and providing equal access to both sexes a purpose of the law.

Sex Equity Coordinator. The Amendments require each state to set aside at least $50,000 from its VEA grant to employ one or more professional employees to work full time to assist the state in eliminating sex discrimination and sex stereotyping in all vocational education programs in the state.

State Advisory Councils. The Act requires each state advisory council on vocational education to have at least one woman member who is knowledgeable about discrimination against women in vocational education, job training and employment, including a minority woman knowledgeable about the dual effects of race and sex discrimination. All councils must have an "appropriate representation" of women and minorities among their membership.

Data Collection. The Amendments established a national Vocational Education Data System (VEDS) to collect state-by-state data on vocational education, including enrollments by sex and race.

State Five-Year Plan. The five-year plan must include a detailed description of the policies and procedures the state will follow to assure equal access to vocational programs by both women and men, including actions to overcome sex discrimination and sex stereotyping in all state and local vocational education programs. It also must describe incentives the state will offer local school systems and postsecondary vocational schools to encourage the enrollment of students in nontraditional programs and to develop model programs to reduce sex bias and stereotyping. The state also must set forth a program to assess and meet the needs of displaced homemakers and single heads-of-household who need job skills and describe special courses and placement services it will offer them.

Annual Program Plan and Accountability Report. The plan must show the results of the state's compliance with federal requirements to provide equal access to women and men and report how funds for vocational education were actually spent.

Public Information. The regulations require the state's assurance that it will make state plans and other documents developed pursuant to implementation of the state plan "reasonably available to the public." Public hearings must be held to get public comment on the plan and allow citizens to make recommendations on the operation of vocational programs.

The Vocational Education Amendments provide funds to be spent in the following ways to promote equal access and to overcome sex bias and stereotyping (unless otherwise noted, expenditures are at state discretion):

Basic Grants

Basic Grant funds may be used for support services for women who want to enter nontraditional occupations and day care services for students' children. The state must set aside funds to provide vocational education programs for displaced homemakers and single heads-of-household who need job training.

Program Improvement and Supportive Services

States may use funds under this subpart to promote sex equity in curriculum, counseling and counseling materials, and personnel training. In funding exemplary and innovative programs, the state is required to give priority to those which are designed to reduce sex bias and stereotyping.

Consumer and Homemaking Education

Federal funds shall only support consumer and homemaking programs which encourage participation of both males and females to prepare for the roles of homemaker and wage earner and which promote the development of curriculum materials which deal with increased numbers of men assuming homemaking responsibilities, the changing career patterns of men and women, and federal, state and local laws relating to equal opportunity in education and employment.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEWEES

New Jersey	William Wenzel
South Carolina	Moody Oswald
Arizona	Ray D. Ryan
Mississippi	Elwyn Wheat
Washington	Homer J. Halverson
Maryland	Addison Hobbs
Alabama	Robert T. Carter
Missouri	Frank Drake
Oklahoma	Francis T. Tuttle
Utah	Walter E. Ulrich
New York	Michael King (Assistant to Jim Kadamas, Acting Director)
California	Patricia Langlin
Wisconsin	Robert Sorenson (also talked with John Kroll, Legislative Liaison)
Iowa	James C. Athen
Illinois	James Galloway
New Mexico	Wilma Ludwig
Texas	W. N. Kirby (serving as Acting Director)
North Dakota	Reuben Guenthner (Acting Director)
Massachusetts	David F. Cronin

Appendix C

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF SURVEY